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Suspenseful Spy Thriller 'The 39 Steps' Crashes Into Johnson Studio

Winthrop University

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Suspenseful Spy Thriller 'The 39 Steps' Crashes Into Johnson Studio

Quick Facts

- Show times are 8 p.m. Oct. 28-31 and 2 p.m. Nov. 1.
- Alfred Hitchcock directed the 1935 film adaptation of "The 39 Steps."



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — Really, really smooth, "like Zac Efron in the 1930s."

That's how **Deonte Streeter** describes his character Richard Hannay, the fast-talking, quick-thinking bachelor who accidentally finds himself caught up in an international espionage plot.

Streeter, a theatre major from Lexington, South Carolina, will bring Hannay to the stage beginning Oct. 28, the opening night of Winthrop University **Department of Theatre and Dance's** production of "**The 39 Steps.**"

Loosely based on the novel of the same name by John Buchan, famous suspense director **Alfred Hitchcock** first brought "The 39 Steps" to life with his 1935 movie adaptation. The British Film Institute has ranked it as one of the best British films of the 20th century.

"The 39 Steps" begins with a chance encounter at a London music hall theatre between Hannay and the mysterious Annabella Schmidt (**Caitlyn Byrne**, Summerville, South Carolina). Annabella confesses that she's a spy and has discovered a plot to steal important British military secrets, hence the first mention of "the 39 steps." This confession launches a rip-roaring whodunit featuring an on-stage plane crash, zany comedy and a little pinch of romance.

Streeter had not heard of or seen the film before being cast as Hannay, but he and the cast have since watched the movie. The film captured his attention.

"I was interested because I'm not that into NCIS, or crime shows like that," he explained. "But I watched this, and I had so many questions and wanted to know what was happening. I kept asking, 'Why is this happening? What is this character's motive?'"

Streeter, who's a member of the Army National Guard, said that while he doesn't relate to Hannay on many levels, he's letting his character speak through him.

"I'm letting him change me because I'm not like him," he said. "I get anxious sometimes, I get nervous sometimes. But Hannay, he's always cool, calm and collected. So it's more about letting him change

me.”

He believes the audience will also relate with Hannay.

“People will connect with him in some way or another,” he said. “You’re going to want him to win, you’re going to want him to get the girl, solve the mystery and come out on top.”

Streeter gave a lot of credit to fellow co-stars **Lauren Landers** (Simpsonville, South Carolina) and **Timothy McFall** (Aiken, South Carolina) who he said bring a lot of comic relief to the production and keep the action going.

The completely student-run and –directed “The 39 Steps” runs Oct. 28-Nov. 1 in **Johnson Studio Theatre**. Show times are 8 p.m. Oct. 28-31 and 2 p.m. Nov. 1. Tickets are \$5 with a Winthrop ID and \$10 without for the Oct. 28-29 shows; tickets are \$8 with a Winthrop ID and \$15 without for the other shows.

For more information, contact the department at 803/323-2287.

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